

**Mountain Empire Model Railroaders Club &  
George L Carter Chapter of NRHS Newsletter**

**THE SIGNAL BRIDGE**

**AND**

**THE COAL ROAD**

Volume 27—Issue 2 February 2020

cover photo courtesy of Paul Haynes

**CLUB NEWS**

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**“Long Month Short Lines” (& Industrial Railroading)  
will be whistlin’ away on February 29<sup>th</sup> at  
ETSU’s George L. Carter Railroad Museum Heritage Day  
*Nationally-recognized Tweetsie layout and logging exhibits  
headline ETSU museum’s event***

For the first time ever, this Saturday event will fall on February 29, the “leap year” extra day in 2020. The more primitive days of American’s railroading industry will be re-counted on the several layouts on exhibit at the George L Carter Railroad Museum. This free-entry multi-room facility located in the Campus Center Building of East Tennessee State University will host short-line and industrial operations for visitors to end the month with a “hoot-hoot!” just as the lonesome whistle sounds.

Normally operating less than 200 miles of track, short lines were just what the name implies, railroad companies that facilitated local and rural train movements. Some were stand-alone companies while others were owned by the corporations whose interests invested in them to access specific areas. These operations sometimes called for specialized equipment, like unique hill-climbing engines and narrower-than-normal track designs.

“These were the sort of things that people might recall from ‘The Little Engine That Could’ children’s story,” laughs the museum’s Heritage Day coordinator Geoff Stunkard. “These were the ‘Little Railroads that Could,’ using whatever means they could to do their work. ‘I think I can,’ was the mindset of the employees and the equipment they kept running day in and day out.

Of course, foremost in this region was the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina (Tweetsie) line. built to service ore movements from Cranberry, North Carolina to a steel mill in Johnson City. The smaller 36”-width track size required unique railroad cars which could not be sent forward to other places using the standard-gauged American-style 54.8” track size. This line has been modeled extensively in HOn3 scale at the museum in the Ken Marsh display hall. The museum’s extensive exhibit of this operation has been featured in nationally-distributed periodicals and is considered the largest example in existence of it in this scale. Other regional short lines formerly ran in the Laurel Fork region. *(continued on page 2)*

# **CLUB NEWS**

*(Heritage Days continued from page 1)*

In the museum is a true-scale model of the original Johnson City steel mill, and a child-friendly G-gauge layout with sound buttons focuses on timber operations, another style of industrial railroading. The short-line theme carries onto the larger HO scale model railroad owned by the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders club, whose members serve as volunteers to operate all of the exhibits, too. They will be heading up the effort for this day; joining them will be members from the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society, also based from this facility. Models of short line and industrial trains will operate on the club's 24x44 HO standard gauge scale operation, on the ET&WNC exhibit, and on the G-gauge.

The Carter Railroad Museum is open on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and includes model railroad layouts, a special child's activity room, and ongoing programs. There is no admission fee but donations are welcome for its upkeep. The museum is also seeking artifacts for display, including the newest addition dedicated to the long-defunct, but well-remembered 'Tweetsie' line, the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad; this room, still under construction, again will be open for guided tours during event days.

In addition to the displays, there is also a growing research library, and an oral history archive being established as part of the museum's programs. Info can be found online at

'<http://etsu.edu/railroad/>' or '<http://stateoffranklin.net/johnsons/glcarter/cartermuseum.htm>'

Members of the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (MEMRR) club coordinate the exhibits. Visit '[www.memrr.org](http://www.memrr.org)' to learn more about MEMRR, or visit '<http://glcarternrhs.com/>' to learn more about the Carter Chapter, which helps demonstrate and maintain the model layouts, museum exhibits and other projects. Membership opportunities are available to adults and include special benefits and model railroading enjoyment.

The museum can be identified by a flashing railroad crossing signal at the back entrance to the Campus Center Building. Visitors should enter ETSU's campus from State of Franklin Road (at the traffic light) onto Jack Vest Drive and continue south to David Collin's Way (then left) to John Roberts Bell Drive at end, then right then next left on Ross Drive(176) to end, adjacent to the flashing RR crossing sign.

For more information about this Heritage Day, contact Fred Alsop at 423-439-6838 or [alsopf@mail.etsu.edu](mailto:alsopf@mail.etsu.edu). For disability accommodations, please call the ETSU Office of Disability Services at 423-439-8346.

## **BIG TRAIN SHOW Date Change:**

**June 5-6, 2020**

# Lose Track of Time!



A photo postcard from the late 1930s shows one of the East Tennessee & North Carolina's second-hand-bought standard-gauge engines, #204, in Johnson City. The line installed standard-narrow "dual gauge" track to Elizabethton and narrow gauge only track beyond that. This engine worked in the yard within the city. *Geoff Stunkard collection*



An image of the incredible model of the Doe River Gorge at the George L. Carter Railroad museum dwarfs the diminutive trains that operate on the exhibit. *Geoff Stunkard photo*

## The Drawbar / The View from the Engineer's Side of the Cab



Winter is here and so far the majority of precipitation has been in the form of rain, rain and more rain with little in the way of snow. But, it provides great days for working indoors and to visit indoor attractions. Our Carter Railroad Museum guys and gals have taken advantage of the weather to work on the layouts in our little museum and to be present on Saturdays to operate them. We have had lots of visitors on Saturdays as well and a breakout of children's birthday parties. All of these combining to make the 2020 new year

a very busy one for us at the museum and we have been enjoying every minute of it. What a great start to a new year and a new decade!

**Welcome 2020 Members:** If you are reading this February newsletter it is because you renewed your membership in the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders club and/or the George L. Carter Chapter NRHS and you are set to be with us enjoying all the privileges of an active membership, including our newsletter, our meetings, our rail excursions, our planning for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Big Train Show, and 24-7 access to the Carter RR Museum. Note: The annual change of the key code has occurred and as a member in good standing of one or both of these organizations you have been sent the new code allowing you to access the building whenever you want to do so. Please remember, that those former members who did not renew their membership no longer have access to the museum except when it is open to the public, so please do not provide them with the new code. May I extend a special welcome and thank you for joining to all of our new members. We hope to make you feel welcome in your new club. Thank you and enjoy your 2020 membership.

**Newsletter:** Our newsletter is getting back on track following and extended illness by our editor, *Cathy Smith*. There have been many public notices regarding the harder-than-normal flu season this year with school closings and many people having to be hospitalized. Some of our members have not escaped the winter's combinations of flu, respiratory and GI-tract illnesses over the past few months. Unfortunately, our editor was also a victim and I am happy to report the news that she is making great headway towards being back on her feet again. I know you join me in extending to her our best wishes for a full and speedy recovery and we look forward to the outstanding monthly newsletters she is producing for us.

Let me remind all of our members that editors depend on text for their publications and our joint newsletter is no exception. Please submit your photos of model and prototype railroads, your modeling tips or stories of your experiences on the iron rails, information you have found in other publications that you want to share with our members, etc., to help our editor fill the pages of our outstanding newsletters. General deadlines for submitting copy to the editor remain around the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month in order to allow sufficient time for your submissions to be received and edited into the newsletter. We look forward to reading your information soon.

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# The Drawbar / The View from the Engineer's Side of the Cab

(continued from page 4)

**2020 NRHS National Fall Meeting in Johnson City, TN:** The George L. Carter Chapter will once again be hosting the National NRHS fall meeting at the Carnegie Hotel in Johnson City. This will mark the second time our Carter Chapter will have hosted the National officers, delegates and members here for their fall meeting. Meeting dates are set for October 15-17, 2020 with the participants arriving on Thursday evening, October 14<sup>th</sup> for registration. Details are not yet set, but tentative plans will be for the members to have a field trip on Friday to Knoxville to tour the Knoxville Locomotive Diesel Shops, ride the 3-Rivers Rambler RR and dine on a luncheon cruise aboard the paddleboat, *The Star of Knoxville*. Saturday will be spent in business meetings (with some members visiting the Carter RR Museum) followed by an evening banquet with a keynote speaker. The conference will end on Sunday morning. Our Carter Chapter members will host and all are invited to register for the events and to attend the activities. Details will be provided as reservations are confirmed. There will be a block of rooms reserved for the convention at the Carnegie Hotel.

**NRHS East RailCamp:** The official application for Jordan Cathelyn to attend the June NRHS RailCamp in Delaware is currently being reviewed at National NRHS headquarters and we should learn in a few weeks if our nominee has been selected to attend. The Carter Chapter has sponsored 3 young men who have attended this outstanding railroad-oriented week-long camp in the past. The Chapter pays the student's tuition and roundtrip transportation (airfare) from Tri-Cities to the NRHS pickup airport in Philadelphia. Sponsoring these high school students annually is one of the service projects of the Carter Chapter and their reports of their experiences at this Amtrak-hosted event have been exciting to share. Funds for this camp are raised through the Chapter's rail excursions and could not be better spent.

**5<sup>th</sup> Annual Big Train Show:** *Roger Teinert's* Big Train Show committee has been meeting monthly since a few weeks after the 4<sup>th</sup> show ended in June 2019 putting everything we have learned from our past shows in play to make this coming show on 5-6 June, 2020 the biggest and best one ever. Every person on the committee has responsibilities for some aspect of the event, some individual and some shared. New banners have been created, new flyers and vendor forms printed and distributed, notices have gone out to rail magazines and on websites, and regional train shows have been visited to talk to vendors, past and potential, and to publicize the event. Many vendors have already responded reserving tables for the show and some train clubs have made it known that they will have their layouts on display. There is still a lot of planning and work to be done and we welcome any of our members to join us at a planning meeting (Third Monday of each month, 5:00 p.m. at Portobello's Restaurant in the Kroger Plaza on State of Franklin). During the week of the event we will need lots of member help with setting up the event, working the event and the Carter RR Museum, and taking down the event when it closes late on Saturday afternoon. Please put the Big Train Show dates on your calendar and plan to help us make this the best one yet!

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# The Drawbar / The View from the Engineer's Side of the Cab

(continued from page 5)

**MEMRR Operations Night:** The first Monday evening of the month is the established time for *Club Operations Night* on the MEMRR HO-Scale layout. All members are invited to attend and become involved in the operation of the layout with multiple trains moving at all times as if it were a prototype railroad. If you have enjoyed operating trains on your home layout, or on the layouts in the Carter Railroad Museum on Saturdays, or at other times on your own, you have not experienced the fun, pressure, exhilaration, sweat, relief, pleasure (insert other words here \_\_\_\_\_) of being with a bunch of club members all of whom have train orders to do specific jobs with their trains and do them pretty much on time! It takes at least 8-10 operators to get most of this done on a given night and 12-20 folks would be much better! Our next scheduled operation is on **Monday, March 3**, beginning around **5:00 p.m.** Put that date and time on your calendar and plan to come join us for a great model railroading evening. No experience necessary, but you will be a much better model railroader when you leave as a pro-hoghead (*aka* model railroad engineer)!

**February Heritage Day:** The February Heritage Day Event set for *Saturday, 29 February*, features those little railroads that connected small towns, industries, and regional resources often to the larger railroads for distant distribution. The day will feature "*Short Lines and Industrial Railroads*". So, get your trains with their home-town consists ready for operation. This is often the day that we see shays and other geared locomotives slowly crawling around the layouts, or light locomotives, both steam and diesel, pulling their specialized mixed loads to and from local destinations. Operate your logging trains, petroleum tank trains, mixed passenger & freight, industrial switchers, etc. The ET&WNC narrow gauge is a short line railroad that will be in full operation in the Ken Marsh Gallery supporting the heritage event.

**News Around the Museum:** In the Alsop Gallery work continues on the MEMRR HO-Scale layout with plans being continued for the conversion of the former Ramey and Roberts layouts into a logging complex with cut and standing timber, logging camp, sawmill, log ponds and all the other details pertaining to mountain logging and processing operations. Work continues on track improvements and wiring for more efficient operations. Jonathan Gilliam restored his new switching yard on his module prior to selling it to Gary Gilliam. Gary is planning some landscape and other changes to the module in the near future. Logan Heaton is still improving his module with its industrial complex while other parts of the layout are receiving some cosmetic attention.

Mike Tarter is making long-needed scenery upgrades to the Bankus N-Scale layout with plans to replace the aging and faded lichen scenery materials with newer ground foam and other more realistic and brighter foliage. This will take some time and any member wishing to lend a hand will be more than welcome to join in this project.

**Rail Excursions Being Planned:** The Carter Chapter NRHS has plans developing for a rail excursion on May 23 to Knoxville to ride the 3-Rivers Rambler Railroad followed by luncheon aboard *The Star of Knoxville*. Details for this outstanding day trip will be announced very soon and we hope you will plan to spend the day with us riding the rails and the waters of the Tennessee River. A Labor Day weekend, Saturday-Monday, trip riding several trains is in the works for the Chattanooga area and those details will also be forthcoming very soon.

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## The Drawbar / The View from the Engineer's Side of the Cab

*(continued from page 4)*

**MEMRR ByLaws Being Amended:** The ByLaws are the guidelines that organizations establish and follow to make their operations work smoothly with transparency for all their members. The MEMRR and the Carter Chapter NRHS both have long-established ByLaws that were created almost as soon as these organizations were founded. Organizations change with time and their guidelines have to change with them as needed. The MEMRR is now in such a transition and is working with its membership to add some new articles to its ByLaws and to perhaps tweak others as needed. To that end we spent some time at the January meeting working on the proposed wording of a new set of articles necessitated by the fact the club is now scheduling regular operating sessions on the club layout, some modules being owned by individual members and some by the MEMRR, and we became aware that some clarification was necessary for the benefit of all as to what those sessions required for the operations to be successful as planned. The proposed Articles that have been edited following suggestions during the January discussion and checked by an attorney to be sure we are not violating anyone's rights, have been circulated to the membership for review via email from the Webmaster. Feedback is requested to me (Fred Alsop) and there will be a second reading for club approval at the February business meeting on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Other proposed Articles will follow regarding citizenship and membership responsibility at coming meetings. All will have at least two readings and be distributed to all members for discussion and recommendations for clarification and changes. Thanks to all in advance for your input into this parliamentary governing process.

**Ashe Street Building:** On Tuesday, February 4<sup>th</sup> news came that the \$5 million grant proposal Johnson City and Washington County leaders had submitted to the governor had been approved by him for renovation of the historic Ashe Street post office building. I have had one meeting with ETSU President Brian Noland regarding this and he is still strongly supporting the Carter RR Museum as a possible tenant for that building and will continue to work with me to that end. I am requesting meetings with Johnson City mayor Jenny Brock and Washington County mayor Joe Grandy. I will relay to you all any news I obtain on this new situation of the funding for the building as it develops. Keep your fingers crossed!

A lot of exciting activities are planned and in motion at our clubs and at the Carter Railroad Museum. Plan to be as much a part of it all as you can in 2020 and continue to support your MEMRR and the Carter Chapter NRHS with your time, your enthusiasm and your skills. Listen to the sound of the whistle of the train in the night and dream of all the destinations yet to come.

*Fred J. Alsop III*

Director, George L. Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU

President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders

President, George L. Carter Chapter NRHS

## MEMRR Monthly Meeting Minutes - 21 January 2020

Meeting called to order at 6:37 PM by President Fred Alsop.

After welcoming remarks, Fred called for Officer Reports.

**Secretary's report:** Mike Tarter reported that the November meeting minutes were published in the Signal Bridge newsletter and that he knows of no corrections needed. Fred asks the attendees for any comments or corrections, there were none. Secretary Mike Tarter makes a motion to accept the minutes as published, seconded by Geoff Stunkard, passed unanimously.

**Newsletter editor:** Cathy Smith is not in attendance, Roger Smith told us she is feeling better. He says the January Signal Bridge is being worked on and articles and photos from members are always welcomed. Fred notes that the Carter Museum newsletter, *The Coal Road*, is now merged into *The Signal Bridge* for both efficiency and to better share information between both organizations.

**Treasurers' report:** Gary Emmert reports we have money. Recent expenditures include additional wireless throttles. He reminds all present that dues for this year (\$30) are now payable, and must be paid before Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. Gary also reminds us that the main access door lock code will be changed at end of month and all paid members will be notified of the new access code.

Webmaster report; Ben Merritt reports the website is up to date. He informs us the Spring Social event in March will be announced in the February Signal Bridge

**V.P. report:** John carter says the 2020 schedule is pretty much complete except for possible group excursions; plans for these are being developed. The schedule as known is noted in the excellent 2020 calendars.

**Presidents' report:** Fred Alsop reports that he attended the Carter Museum group meeting the previous night. He discussed that the Carter group will combine with our clubs Christmas party on Dec. 18. There was some date confusion, someone confirmed the date on our calendar is the 18<sup>th</sup>. Fred elaborated on the Spring Fling Social - it will likely be on March 19<sup>th</sup> at Longhorn restaurant. Fred reports that parking permits are available, and that he will have volunteer legal releases available at the Thursday evening work session. Fred reminded us this Saturday is Heritage day, and that public attendance is usually heavy. Also, there is a birthday party event set for this Saturday - can members please assist with preparation.

**Old Business:** Fred reminded us the next operating session at 5 PM on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. He says the feedback he's getting is that the timetable/ operating plan drafted by Geoff Stunkard is real different and interesting.

Train show committee; Roger Teinert reports plans are progressing well, with 6 layouts and 8 vendors paid so far. Fred and Roger are sending out calendars and flyers with the display invite, to prospective vendors and media. Discussion about getting this event on Facebook. Geoff mentioned he has been in contact with a Lego group to invite them to participate with train related Lego structures.

**Coordinators meetings:** minutes of the January meeting have been sent to Cathy will be in the newsletter.

**Other Old business-** there was some jovial discussion about revisiting some of the Dirty Santa gift swaps.

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## MEMRR Monthly Meeting Minutes - 21 January 2020

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**New Business:** Gary Emmert reports he took the initiative to open and dig into some of the old cabinets, finding dust of the ages, rubble, debris, old bones, leavings of war, fossils, etc. As part of going through old materials he noted the published standards for modules have not been updated since 2001. Frank was drafted to review and update some of these. In discussion we were reminded that Jim Hoyt is still maintaining the standards for ownership color coding of personal rolling stock. Fred mentioned that when the club was started back in 1993 the modules were portable.

Gary Gilliam asked if there exists a master electrical diagram for the HO layout - no one present knows of such.

Fred asked about possibly storing the 'creeper' under the layouts; it is designed to fold up for storage. This discussion digressed, and brought up the need to replace some layout curtains/ skirting for both the Tweetsie and the HO layout on the inside.

Gary Emmert will send the updated paid members list to officers and the webmaster.

Ben suggests setting up a group/ committee to draft youth members guidelines. Susan suggested that related to that, to draft some bylaws verbiage for youth participation.

Fred updated us on info about the possible new building, how various groups he has been in contact with are working on obtaining Historic Building status and funds for renovation. The city wants to attract more pedestrian traffic to downtown business, galleries and museums may help this.

Fred took note of volunteers to work on the layouts on future Saturdays.

Fred circulated four written proposals for additions/ changes to our Club bylaws. The group dug into these quite seriously, with extensive discussion of verbiage and more importantly the underlying intent, logic, and purpose for the proposed bylaws. This was very informative and far too long to regurgitate herein.

One specific aspect: Geoff made a motion for the executive committee to nominate / designate a at large member. Gary Emmert seconded, this passed with a voice vote.

Since the meeting ran late, there was no 'program'.

At 9:03 the meeting was adjourned by acclamation.

Respectfully submitted;

Mike Tarter, Secretary

# Lose Track of Time!

contributed by Bill Smith

The **wedge plow** or **Bucker plow** was first developed by railroad companies to clear snow in the American West. The wedge plow forces snow to the sides of the tracks and therefore requires a large amount of force due to the compression of snow. The wedge plow is still in use today in combination with the high-maintenance rotary snowplow.



# OS TOWER CALL

*contributed by Geoff "The Zookeeper" Stunkard*

## Operating notes from February 3, 2020 session

Once again, members of the MEMRR were on hand February 3<sup>rd</sup> to facilitate the functional running of the club's layout. This is the fifth session since the restart of monthly operations in October. There were crews on hand for two yard-based switch crews, three freight crews and one passenger crew, with Stunkard as the (Zookeeper) dispatcher, Ben Merritt in the tower seat running mainline train positioning, and hostler roles fulfilled by individuals. As regulars can note, the formal schedule has been fluid but steady, and this report will give a basic breakdown of train movements that were accomplished, though we still have a situation of annulling some trains due to a lack of engineers.

**YARD WORK** – John Carter and Jordan handled the creation of the freight trains in the yard, building 1,2,3,4,5,6,and 7. Due to time lost on the layout and lack of more crews, FT5 was annulled and FT7 was in place of 8 and used to return Heaton equipment to that module. FR55 Redball ran as the final train, so Train 8/9 were cancelled without returning Hyder coal cars back to the tipple or working the Gillam Industrial area. This equipment was moved on Sunday and Tuesday to reset the layout.



Paul Haynes is moving reefers in and out of the dairy behind the round-house using a classic set of Southern F units as part of train #2s scheduled movements.

**FREIGHT WORK** – Train 1 and 4 was run by Frank Fezzie, Train 2 was run by Paul Haynes.

# OS TOWER CALL

(continued from page 11)



Clean-up in Haynes is being done by a Lima-built BLI C&O T1 Texas-type on Thursday evening. Fred Alsop is contemplating a route down to the distillery in the lower area.

Train 3 was run by Fred Alsop. Train 5 was annulled and 7-to-8 was run by Stunkard. FR55 was run by Stunkard, but no reefer icing service rotation was initiated due to lateness of the hour. All operators ended up waiting on several delays in return-to-yard movements which impacted the scheduling of subsequent outbound trains, but no serious issues were encountered beyond normal. One train went out inverted, and one returned with unintended pick-ups. Yard clean-up was scheduled for the following week, and private modules had been either cleared or reset by Thursday evening's work night.

PASSENGER WORK – Roger Teinert and Lanny Norris (as conductor) handled passenger trains 1 (Swallowtail) and 2 (Watuagean), Jordan staged #611 for Pass 3 engine move (Pocahontas) which was also run by Teinert / Norris. Passenger terminal switcher for #1 REA setouts was run by Stunkard. TR99 was annulled, as was 5 (Stemwinder), meaning movements at Heaton depot were annulled as well. Teinert then ran #6 (Powhatan Arrow) as final passenger train to return N&W consist to Johnson depot.

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# OS TOWER CALL

(continued from page 12)

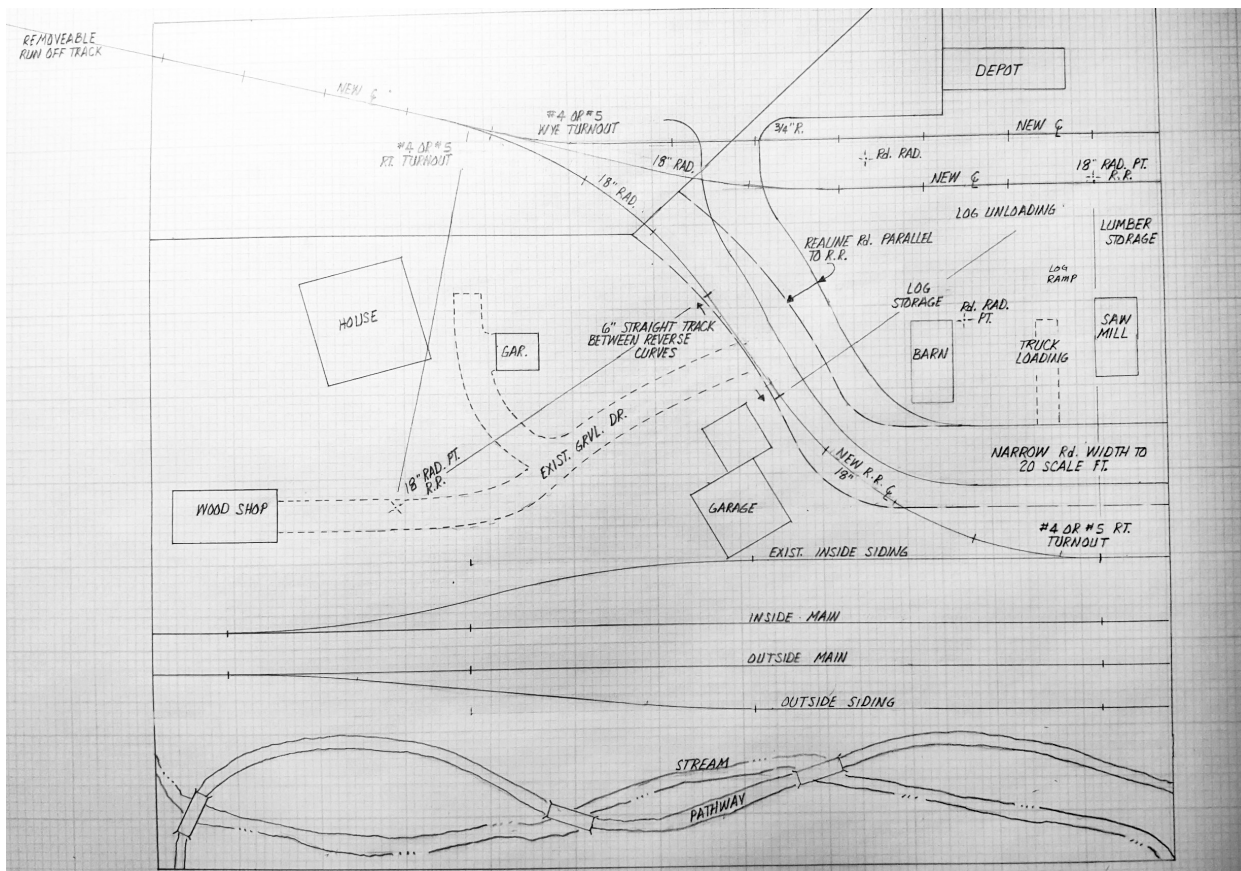
## MISC – MODULES UPDATE

TEINERT “Rogers” – following the Feb session, Frank Fezzie began switch replacement in Rogers to clean up on-going track issues, including the replacement of a faulty switch, Kadee undertrack magnet removal and light track rerouting.

GALLAGHER – Rich has also pulled the Kadee magnet uncoupler on the inside passing track near SW325 to prevent train separation during through all through operations.

HAYNES – Following derailments in January’s session and subsequent testing, switches 333 and 332 at Haynes were “tuned” by Frank Fezzie to eliminate some derailing issues. Care is required due to tight clearances in mill area; as expected 16-wheel and pedestal-truck steam tenders cannot NOT run backward into this switching zone. Idler cars are required if using bigger mainline power. Interchange set-out track has been graciously left clear by Paul to continue testing switch routes.

HOIT – Jim Hoit has prepared a written plan for accessing the rear segment of his module that will entail a mild woodwork filler and switchback. It is published here and serves as an excellent example on the thought that should go into all changes.



Jim Hoit module drawing

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## OS TOWER CALL

*(continued from page 13)*

ALSOP GORGE – Fred Alsop is still considering possibility of a ramp-style drop-down track to reach his distillery located directly beneath the high bridge. This is not formally drawn or measured yet but would likely entail a removable section coming from a stub on Rogers to begin its descent and appears it will need a double switchback to reach functionality.

ALSOP INDUSTRIAL – Following the electrical issue that impacted January, subsequent upgrades have made so that the Alsop coal ramp and siding are again capable of receiving cars using a minimum of 3 40' idler cars (flat or empty boxcar). The switchback to the rear was originally built short for use with the decorative mirror. However, the plan to connect to this track via a bridge directly to the staging area was declined due to serious polarity issues it would create. An alternative not discussed is a rear rerouting across the back of Haynes and Alsop Gorge that would connect to the track possibilities being proposed at Hoit. Measurements for proper legal width behind the modules have not been calculated to determine this is possible, and should be researched further before determining work to either end of this module..

GILLAM INDUSTRIAL – Gary Gillam is presently creating the plan for reuse on the industrial area to the rear of his module, and is considering a modest-to-tall land form to separate it from direct front view in keeping with the mountainous terrain in this area. The outside sidings have been reinstalled, leaving two through sidings and one long stub for car interchange. This remains the crucial chokepoint for all operating session, being used for both Haynes/Alsop and Hyder interchange work, and Gary's efforts to restore this area is commendable.

HYDER – “Elkhorn Mine” remains a challenge that requires careful preplanning to operate. Frank Fezzie ran train 4 during the session without major problems switching from the east end, and Stunkard returned cars to the area via the west end on Tuesday afternoon without incident. Hobie Hyder is hoping to come and operate with us in the future.

HEATON – The Heaton area is tight for switching but has shown no major problems other than possibly some points clean-up for better switch functionality. At the rear, the second track uses a #6/4 curved switch that requires either idlers of 40' length or a short wheelbase locomotive when bringing longer cars in and out for use. Due to timing, testing on the team tracks has not been formally completed but it appears movement of express cars will require an engine/car move prior to arrival and the temporary blocking of both mainlines during the switch move if the passenger train in question is longer than 4 cars or there are inbound express cars as well. This is an area that may require a local switch engine always on call for car movements, luckily facilitated by the 398/401 crossover combination, but, as noted, this situation therefore takes both mainlines out of through service in that area. We will confer with Logan on his suggested solutions to this.

GILLAM TUNNEL – no issues, with 401 remaining a critical component in train movements. Ideas on through service to lower section and rear trackage connected to Heaton are under development.

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# OS TOWER CALL

*(continued from page 14)*

RAMEY/ROBERTS – Most dramatic of changes are the under-development projects for the Ramey/Roberts segments now owned by the MEMRR. The first stage is being done, which are the efforts on restoring the logging ring at top. Wood forms were being designed during the 2/6 work night, and most switches for the loop have been installed.

The second stage is waiting for approval, but will be a 12” extension to the front edge to help lengthen the footprint of the switchback and add some well-detailed logging town options. Stage 3 is under consideration only and has no formal determination but tentatively will entail a logging industrial scene in place of the current factory and steep switchback on the Roberts area. One suggestion is to extend both the upper logging loop visibly on a ridge toward Gillam Tunnel area, therefore hiding an extension of one or two rear storage sidings connected by Gillam Tunnel/Heaton modules into this area, as well as a third staging level hidden behind the same ridge for trackage entering via trestle or tunnel beneath any ridge-design extension that comes into the lower part of Roberts.

The log industry switching within the lower area would likely include cars for logging, finished lumber and pulp visible on the lower display, with a siding at mainline level for the planning mill outbounds and raw timber movement. If created, hidden storage for additional coal or interchange equipment would be on two stacked staging tracks behind, directly under the logging loop’s rear segment. It is hoped some of this can be discussed at the February meeting.

JOHNSON DEPOT – Work on scenic ideas continues. The highway overpass crossing the station industrial lead was being roughed-out and will be bench-built for easy removal as needed. Businesses at the rear are not finalized yet but will be freight-oriented. Positioning of a permanent station switcher are also being considered, with adjacent facilities to be developed to that location. Nothing more has been done to the “across-the-tracks” city scene since Ted Bleck-Doran left, so a plan for that is looking for a volunteer for idea development.



The future highway bridge at Johnson depot will eliminate traffic being stuck at the busy grade crossing, though trains running in the adjacent street will still require attentive driving. “No texts, no wrecks!”

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## OS TOWER CALL

*(continued from page 15)*

**YARD / ENGINE SERVICE** – The steam roundhouse industrial siding has been installed, as has a second through-track beneath the coal dock. Frank Fezzie and Jonathan Gillam handled the trackwork while Gary Gillam is presently puzzling together the new coal elevator. The diesel shop is functioning fine, with the potential addition of the planned three-track car repair facility still under development. In the yard itself, mapping the potential usage of storage areas is published elsewhere in this issue. As noted, almost a year was spent in the development of the track plan for the yard, and specific areas are designated for specific car storage. This is not “set in stone” but members are asked to keep cars arranged into their specific regions, especially as the month ends and plans of the next operating session will require set-up. **NEWER CARS** – due to the number of members using newer engines and cars, the former area for the stockyard behind the switch tower is the preferred storage location. This is not selected to keep them out of sight but to create a specific area not tied to an industrial facet of the yard’s design to be used. The lack of stock-type movements makes this the best location, and additional modern trains can be stored to track 4 or track 6 in staging.

**STAGING YARD** – As per Fred and the museum’s requirements, the plan for a balloon track on staging has been declined for the time being due to crucial space issue. A potential switchback at the stub end to remove motive power is possible but the length of this has not been determined. Again, something that can be discussed at the meeting.

**CONCLUSION** – We are looking for operators to assume working positions at the operations sessions. To work well, each train should have an engineer and a conductor/switchman. It has been suggested that by stationing switch engines strategically on the layout, there can be ongoing outbound development work done prior to the movement of mainline trains. We do not have enough crews to run the 14 trains already scheduled, so this would be on hold until we can crew them. Obviously, if things develop, we can add tower operators to specific areas as well, and presently we are not having any scheduled train built out by car #, just car type. Jim Hoit has a list of every car the club owns by number. At any rate, how does it work... Gary Gillam gave the quote of the night - “I have not heard that much screamin’ since I saw the parents at Jonathan’s first-grade soccer game!” See you March 2!



# CLUB NEWS—PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Fellow MEMRR Members the amendment that follows is the second draft of the proposed amendment that the members present at the January MEMRR business meeting discussed and suggested amendments to. The red fonts, including the strike throughs, are the currently suggested changes to that document. They were made by me from notes I took during that discussion. Further, the document has been studied by an attorney who is a club member for accuracy and fairness under the law and he had deemed that it as written. I ask each of you to read the document, reflect on it and make any further suggestions for additional changes to me. We will vote to accept or reject it as amended at the February business meeting.

Thank you.

Fred Alsop

President, Mountain Empire Model Railroaders.

## AMENDMENT 2020.01-01: AFFIRMATION OF GENERAL MEMRR CLUB OPERATIONS & LAYOUT ACCESSIBILITY BY MODULE OWNERS

Due to changes in sectional ownership as well as permanent adaptations in the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (hereto after as MEMRR) layout's interaction within a public facility, it has become evident a need exists to clarify the purpose and utility of the MEMRR's club layout to both current module owners and all members in good standing. As a result, the following amendment is suggested in full or in part for this continued understanding.

Note: "Executive Committee" is hereafter defined as the MEMRR's current elected President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, **three (3) to-be-entered members-at-large**, and the G.L. Carter Railroad Museum's Director. **The MEMRR officers and two (2) of the members-at-large shall be elected by the MEMRR at their annual November business meeting; the third member-at-large shall be selected from the membership by the Executive Committee.** The term "we" in this document refers to the fraternal membership and officers in majority unison.

1. WHEREFORE the HO-scale railroad layout exhibit is co-owned **in a collaborative effort** by the MEMRR club and individual members **contributing to the club with one or more modules, therefore, joining in a common shared area** and created and built for the enjoyment of all members. **This layout is constructed to promote our hobby of model railroading and for the satisfaction of others to see and for the overall enjoyment of all.** This document affirms that the notion of having exclusive-use tracks, yards, industries and equipment storage areas is **in-error of contrary to** the club's mission. This statement, however, does not negate the benefits of personal ownership of a module as a display of one's ability to design, model and create scenes for the enjoyment of the membership or viewing public.

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# CLUB NEWS—PROPOSED AMENDMENT

(continued from page 17)

- 2) AND...we affirm members have invested both money and time into track and associated semi-permanent components. That stated, any track modification program to this layout, whether on club or on personal module areas, is to be executed for the benefit of the membership in total and is never done for the sole exclusive use of one party, either individually or as a collective sub-group within the fraternity.
- 3) AND...we agree members are permitted to store their personal equipment on a module track area for display or layout use. However, those members are not allowed to restrict access to the trackage by other members simply as a result of their module ownership.
- 4) AND... we establish members are expected to maintain functional accessibility to all areas of their module by the membership in general, meaning wired with operational sidings, switches and associated electronics.
- 5) AND... the times of community layout use and the usage of any module's associated track work (mainline and sidings) and its modeled facilities, will be based on a decision of the executive committee with input by the membership. Such use is not the exclusive decision of the owner of the module section.
- 6) AND... for scheduled operation events, ALL tracks that are part of the entirety of the MEMRR layout will be used by the club community a MINIMUM of one day a month for scheduled operations and will also be made available as needed to also facilitate testing for that scheduling with permission.
- 7) THEREFORE -
  - 1) Exclusive-use trackage was never granted previously and is still not permitted in any form. Members storing personal equipment on module track work agree to and understand all equipment on any siding is subject to possible interchange during the scheduled operations at their own risk. **Therefore, all tracks are considered open to everyone during club operations.**
  - 2.) Module owners retain possession of the stated area they own, but are required to give ample notice (~~30~~ **90 days** in advance) of any decision to remove a module in its entirety. The **Executive Committee will grant ~~or deny~~ such a request ~~will with~~ all associated costs or bonds incurring, following a 15-day period of negotiation with the module owner, first with options for another MEMRR member to purchase said module to keep it within**

(continued on page 19)

# CLUB NEWS—PROPOSED AMENDMENT

(continued from page 18)

**within the present layout. If such purchase cannot be met by a member, this shall be followed by a second negotiation period within the 15 days to purchase said module via the MEMRR organization for the same reason. A failure to negotiate a final transferable sale will be followed by a written notice to remove the module in 30 days. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to adjust the termination notice. All rulings are final.**

- 8) **FURTHERMOREORE** - Any attempt to prevent the membership use of this track work, including the unwiring of switches or sidings, derailment of cars or other sabotage is grounds for immediate discipline up to and including expulsion from the MEMRR, possibly without recourse or any noted prior infraction.
- 9) **Barring expulsion, such** a member presently owning a module is hereby requested to sell that module within 15 days of passage of this amendment if unwilling to agree to these terms. A suspended or expelled member forfeits all rights to physically remove a module from the facility.

**IN CONCLUSION** - all present module owners will sign the associated multi-member document attesting to their agreement to this amendment. A copy of this signed document will then be presented to each and all signatories. A failure or refusal to sign this agreement **or to abide with the terms of sale noted above** within 30 days of passage as established by a consensus of the membership will indicate an immediate, voluntary withdrawal from membership in the MEMRR as per amendment 2020.02 by the owner.

## STATEMENT OF CLARITY

“LET IT BE HEREIN NOTED, any member who believes or presently infers the idea of exclusive-use track work or facility arrangements is hereby deemed as having misinterpreted the mission of our public outreach and the goals of club membership. Such an individual will be given a single verbal warning by an officer with a second officer present. Following this, being the 1<sup>st</sup> of a 3-strike process, reprimands of an increasingly serious measure will be initiated regarding the said person. Repeated violations of these standards will be heretofore become subject to the terms for “discipline for inappropriate action” under amendment 2020-02, and may be filed in immediate succession. All rulings are final.”

### Amendment 2020.01-02: AFFIRMATION OF CLUB OPERATIONS **RETROACTIVE ACTIVE DATE**

Passage of this amendment will allow the **retroactive active** dating to **1-1-2020 become effective immediately** of all rules in 2020-01, allowing any discipline process to begin immediately.

Amendment 2020.01: Addendum 1 - Separate attachment - Recommended signatory document to be attached.

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# CLUB NEWS—PROPOSED AMENDMENT

*(continued from page 19)*

## SIGNATORY PAGE FOR AMENDMENT 2020.01 MODULE OWNER CLUB USAGE AGREEMENT

### STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT

As an owner of a module presently used on the MEMRR layout in the George L. Carter Railroad Museum, I, the undersigned, understand my ownership of this unit does not allow for exclusive non-access yards, engine service areas or industries. If the track is attached to the mainline in any way, directly or indirectly, I agree said trackage presently installed on my module is either active, wired, and available to all members for use, or is intended to be soon connected in some form to the mainline for community use if not presently so.

I further agree that any personal equipment of mine left in place during the scheduled monthly operating session or pre-event operations testing could be subject to movement throughout the layout and hereby sign this document giving that permission to those participants or principals at my own risk. I agree to remove all personal equipment from the layout if I do not want to participate in such movements or am requested to do so, and will thereby have all track work available regardless.

Furthermore, if determined by the Executive Committee with input from the membership that the current track or industries on my module do not allow for logical, general membership reuse, I am in agreement to abide by any written, approved changes to that effect if so ordered. Also if requested, I further agree to restore any and all track, switches and wiring that were removed after 09/31/2019 to return the functionality to my module and facilitate all previously-planned scheduled operations that have been hindered by the same action. I understand this work will be solely at my expense.

If unwilling to do so, I agree to ~~forfeit ownership~~ negotiate in good faith the sale of my module with the Executive Committee ~~of the module in question immediately and sell it within 15 days~~ or to remove it at a date set by that committee not to exceed 45 days. I understand any attempt by me to remove the module in its entirety will be solely at the allowance by the Executive Committee and that their decision will not be unreasonably withheld and I will post all associated fees and bonds to facilitate such movement ~~if as shall be~~ agreed upon.

Finally, I understand that the layout is presently themed to the Appalachian Mountains of the 1940s-50s era. I will display equipment and structures in keeping with that era unless granted an exception by the Executive Committee. I am a member in good standing and sign this document agreeing to Amendment 2020.01 voluntarily to maintain my present in-good-standing membership status.

Conversely, it has been agreed to by consensus that my failure or refusal to sign this document within 30 days of passage will indicate my immediate, voluntary withdrawal from membership

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**Mountain Empire Model  
Railroaders Club**

Location:



George L. Carter Railroad Museum  
East Tennessee State University

**Business Meetings**

Held monthly on the  
3rd Tuesday at 6:30pm.  
\*

**Weekly Work Nights**

Thursdays from 4pm until ?

**MEMRR Club Officers**

- **Club President & Director of George L Carter Railroad Museum, ETSU:** Fred Alsop  
alsopf@mail.etsu.edu
- **Vice President:** John Carter  
carterjohn92@gmail.com
- **Treasurer:** Gary Emmert  
jbox1015@comcast.net
- **Secretary:** Mike Tarter  
miketarter06@gmail.com
- **Webmasters:**  
Logan Heaton  
Ben Merritt  
Bill Smith  
memrrwebmaster@gmail.com
- **Newsletter Editor:**  
Cathy Smith

**George L. Carter**

**Chapter NRHS Officers:**

- **President:** Dr. Fred J. Alsop
- **Vice Pres:** Roger Teinert
- **Secretary:** Carl Hacker
- **Treasurer:** John W. Dodge
- **Historian:** Carolyn Gregg
- **National Representative to the NRHS:** Charlotte Pahriss

# George L Carter Railroad Museum and MEMMR

The many colorful multiple railroads of the Midwest are featured at the George L. Carter Railroad Museum, located in the Campus Center Building of East Tennessee State University. The region encompassing Chicago, Detroit, Louisville, Milwaukee and St. Louis was the true epicenter of American commerce between east and west during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Literally dozens of railroads large and small provided service throughout Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and the upper midwestern states, all service as links to the chain.

Between passenger and freight operations, the railroad were crucially important in the era before widespread air travel and interstate highways. This was especially true during the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars. Whether it was perishables like produce and livestock or raw commodities such as coal and ore, everything from store goods to Studebakers came from this region. Since so many models of these trains remain popular, icons of streamlining and strength, it is planned to have excellent Midwestern representations in operation by volunteers on the museum's 24x44 foot HO scale layout. The Carter Railroad Museum is open on Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and includes model railroad layouts, a special child's activity room, and ongoing programs. There is no admission fee but donations are welcome for its upkeep. The museum is also seeking artifacts for display, including the newest addition dedicated to the long-defunct, but well-remembered 'Tweetsie' line, the East

In addition to the displays, there is also a growing research library, and an oral history archive being established as part of the museum's programs. Info can be found online at '<http://etsu.edu/railroad/>' or '<http://johnsonsdetpot.com/>' or '<http://www.stateoffranklin.net/johnsons/glcarter/cartermuseum.html>'

Members of the George L. Carter Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society and the Mountain Empire Model Railroaders (MEMRR) club coordinate the exhibits. Visit '[www.memrr.org/](http://www.memrr.org/)' to learn more about MEMRR, or visit '<http://glcarternrhs.com/>' to learn more about Carter Chapter, which helps demonstrate and maintain the model layouts, museum exhibits and other projects.

Membership opportunities are available to adults, and include special benefits and model railroading enjoyment.

The museum can be identified by a flashing railroad crossing signal at the back entrance to the Campus Center Building. Visitors should enter ETSU's campus from State of Franklin Road (at green light) onto Jack Vest Drive and continue east to North Dossett Drive (then left) to John Roberts Bell Drive at end, then right then left on Ross Drive(176) to end, adjacent to the flashing RR crossing sign.

- *For more information about Heritage Day, contact Fred Alsop at 423-439-6858 or [asopf@mail.etsu.edu](mailto:asopf@mail.etsu.edu).*
- *For disability accommodations, call the ETSU Office of Disability Services at*

## **BIG TRAIN SHOW Date Change:**

**June 5-6, 2020**